



Stilgebauer Award 2010 – Application Form

Please provide the information below. This application form needs to accompany the Project Summary for the project to be considered for a Stilgebauer award. Individuals or teams may complete the required information for their own project(s) or for another teacher or group's project

A New Media Literacy Project: Connecting Today's	
Project Name: Learner to A Thousand Splendid Suns	
School Regional Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> North Cook <input type="checkbox"/> South Cook <input type="checkbox"/> West 40
District Name	Northfield Township
District No.	225
Name(s)-Teams with up to 5 members will be accepted! Include all names.	Email Address(s)
* Lori Sue Natt (teacher)	*lnatt@glenbrook.k12.il.us
* Stephanie Bitter (co-teacher)	*sbitter@glenbrook.k12.il.us
* Ryan Bretag	*rbretag@glenbrook.k12.il.us
*	*
*	*
School Name	Glenbrook North High School
School Street Address	2300 Shermer Rd.
School City, State, Zip	Northbrook, IL 60062
School Phone Number	847-272-6400
If you are providing information to nominate another teacher or group, please provide your information below (if different from those named above).	
Nominator's Name	Stephanie Bitter
Nominator's Phone #	847-509-2565
Best Contact Time	7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Nominator's Email	sbitter@glenbrook.k12.il.us

Please attach the Project Summary to this form and send to Learning Technology Center One Central at 2701 W. Washington Blvd., 2nd Floor, Bellwood, IL 60104

Project Descriptive Title

A New Media Literacy Project: Connecting Today's Learner to *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Project Abstract

When we look at what it means to be well educated in the 21st century, the New Media Literacy Project: Connecting Today's Learner to *A Thousand Splendid Suns* project at Glenbrook North by English teacher Lori Sue Natt is the quintessential example of 21st century teaching and learning. The project was designed to scaffold student understanding of culture, politics and themes that frame experiences in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Students collaborated in groups to research, negotiate, and create a combined new media literacy-based Google Earth Literature Trip that required a synthesis of traditional and new media literacy skills: appropriation, collective intelligence, distributed cognition, judgment, multitasking, play, and transmedia navigation.

Grade Levels: 9th Grade

Subject Areas: English, Language Arts

Technology Resources: Google Earth, wiki, various Web 2.0 applications, Macbooks/iMacs, moviemaking applications

Other Materials Used: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini

Standards

NETS: 1.A, 1.B, 2.A, 2.B, 2.D, 3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 4.A, 4.B, 4.D., 5.A, 5.B, 5.C, 5.D, 6.B, 6.D

Illinois State Standards: 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A, 5A, 5B, 5C

Process

Groups began by pooling their knowledge and research together in a class wiki, giving them the opportunity to collaborate and evaluate their content in a central space to which all students could contribute. Groups organized and synthesized the information and then used it to determine what would be the most meaningful method for expressing their thinking through digital content and which tools would afford the best representation for publication.

Each group selected from an open range of web 2.0 and other technologies from which students selected XTimeline, Wordle, Glogster, digital storytelling, and YouTube to interpret, construct, remix, and create content based on their research giving students full choice and ownership over their learning and how they expressed that learning. In addition, the final product required collective intelligence and negotiation as a community to develop a cohesive Google Earth Lit Trip.

Once the Lit Trip was completed, students used the content within it as points of reference as they navigated the text. As experts in their particular areas, each group took ownership of information as it was applied to the text during fishbowl discussions. Every student had the opportunity to contribute to class understanding of the text by leveraging the digital content and

new media literacy skills that allowed the class to fully understand the culture, politics and history described in the text, and to connect meaningfully with its characters and themes.

Integration

Through the blending of student choice and social media, the classroom was transformed into a community grounded in collaboration, creation, contribution, communication, connections and formal and informal learning. By making learning independent of time, space, place, and size, the classroom became a multidimensional learning space that was both permeable and transparent.

By reallocating time for inquiry, collaboration and creation, student learning became rooted in constructivism and connectivism focused on higher order thinking and 21st century skills. Because of this, the potential to scaffold skills and teach students about content distribution exists within this space: what is published, broadcast, created, distributed and mashed up. From this, students learn to be multidisciplinary scholars, networked thinkers and lifelong learners beyond the classroom. These creations are controlled by students as part of the greater knowledge network of their peers, global and local.

Reflection

Upon reading *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, I was first struck by the vast differences between the culture brought to life by the author and the one I knew my students inhabited in Northbrook. How would I bridge the gap between affluent American suburb and war-torn, Islamic Afghanistan? How could I help them to move beyond a stick-figure view of a country so far away and lead them to appreciate the characters' struggles in the novel?

Since I knew my students would know very little about Afghanistan, I decided that a research project would build prior knowledge before we read the text, as well as develop their ability to read and analyze sources. Since *place* plays such a central role in the story, Google Earth was a natural fit as a vehicle for displaying research and a valuable asset in student-led discussions.

In 2008, this project limited student choice and focused on an integrated class project. This year, shifted to a more complex project: student choice, Bloom's Digital Taxonomy, and New Media Literacy skills as defined by educator and media literacy advocate Henry Jenkins.

The "trip" became a natural, transparent part of the class as the issues, events and ideas in the research cropped up in the story. Marking the text where the research was relevant, students increased their skills evidence-based supporting for their ideas. We used the essential questions to analyze those places projected on screen using Google Earth. Almost all of the students reported that the project greatly increased their comprehension and enjoyment of the text.

Next year, we have established a cooperative connection with Maris Stella High School in Singapore that we allow global collaboration using this new media literacy project.